

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4-7, and 10-13 remain in the application with claims 1, 2, 4, and 7 having been amended hereby and claims 3, 8, and 9 having been cancelled, without prejudice or disclaimer.

In regard to applicant's claim for Foreign Priority, it will be noted that this application is an application filed under the Rules of the Patent Cooperation Treaty and, as such, the original certified copy of the Foreign Priority Application is filed with the application in the original PCT office, that is, in Japan.

Reconsideration is respectfully requested of the rejection of the claims under 35 USC 112, as being indefinite. Claim 2 has been amended to provide proper antecedent basis throughout. Claim 8 has been cancelled but added to claim 7 and, in that regard, Claim 7 has also been provided with the proper antecedent basis.

Reconsideration is respectfully requested of the rejection of claims 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, and 13 under 35 USC 102(e), as being anticipated by Howitt.

In paragraph 10 of the instant official action, claims 3, 4, 9, and 10 were indicated as presenting allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 1 has been amended hereby to include the allowable subject matter of claim 3, and claim 7 has been amended hereby to include the allowable subject matter of claim 9. Claims 3 and

9 have been cancelled.

Accordingly, because claims 1 and 7 now include allowable subject matter, it is respectfully submitted that claims 2 and 6, which depend from claim 1, and claim 13, which depends from claim 7, are also patentably distinct.

Reconsideration is respectfully requested of the rejection of claims 5, 11, and 12 under 35 USC 103, as being unpatentable over Howitt in view of Schnizlein.

It is noted hereinabove that claim 1 has been amended to include allowable subject matter and claim 5 depends from claim 1. Similarly, claim 7 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of claim 9 and claims 11 and 12 both depend from claim 7.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that these dependent claims are also in condition for allowance.

Accordingly, in view of the amendments made to the claims hereby, and as well as the above remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all claims remaining in this application include allowable subject matter.

Favorable reconsideration is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADEIN THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1, 2, 4, and 7 by rewriting same to read as follows and cancel claims 3, 8, and 9 without prejudice or disclaimer.

--1. (Twice Amended) An audio signal processing method for performing a process for decoding supplied data, comprising the steps of:

detecting whether zero data continues for a predetermined period of time in said supplied data;

determining, when zero data continue for said predetermined period of time, that said supplied data are compressed audio data; and

performing a decoding operation on said supplied data[.]

wherein when zero data continuing for said predetermined period of time is not detected, it is determined that said supplied data are non-compressed audio data, and said decoding operation is performed.

--2. (Twice Amended) The audio signal processing method described in claim 1, wherein upon detection that zero data continue for said predetermined period of time, said decoding is performed by switching said supplied data to said decoding operation based on [the] a sync signal of said supplied data.

--4. (Twice Amended) The audio signal processing method described in claim [3] 1, wherein said supplied audio data are stored for said predetermined period during which it is detected whether said zero data continue, and when it is determined that said supplied data are non-compressed audio data, the result of decoding said supplied audio data is output following the result of decoding said stored audio data.

--7. (Twice Amended) An audio signal processing apparatus

comprising:

detection means for detecting whether zero data continue for a predetermined period of time in supplied data;

determining means for determining that said supplied data is compressed audio data when the result of detection by said detection means is that zero data continues for said predetermined period of time; and

decoding means for decoding said supplied data based on the result of said determination by said determining means[.],

wherein when said detection means detects that zero data continue for said predetermined period of time, said decoding means switches to said decoding based on a sync signal of said supplied data, and decodes said supplied data, and

wherein said determining means determines that said supplied data are non-compressed audio data when zero data are not detected continuously for said predetermined period of time.